



Georgia Technology Authority

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GTA planning for VoIP in state government

GTA is negotiating a VoIP contract with the apparent winning vendor of a competitive bid.

- The contract can be used by all state agencies to obtain their VoIP services.
- GTA will manage the contract.

GTA has involved state agencies and vendors in developing its approach to VoIP services.

- GTA hosted a VoIP information session for vendors and agencies in November 2005.
- GTA conducted a 180-day trial of VoIP with four different vendors, each assigned to a different state agency.
- GTA posted a draft of the RFP requirements on the Georgia Procurement Registry and invited vendor comments.

GTA began its formal efforts to develop a Voice over IP (VoIP) service in February 2005 with assistance from several agencies and The Burton Group, a leading VoIP expert.

A report given to GTA by The Burton Group in July 2005 recommended a carefully planned migration to a hybrid IP-PBX, centrally managed environment in order to

- minimize capital, operational and maintenance costs
- allow agencies to retain their existing voice and data networks and to migrate to VoIP when they need it and can afford it
- enable agencies to use analog, digital or IP telephones
- allow services to be managed from a central location.

An enterprise approach is preferable to allowing agencies to purchase their own stand-alone PBX systems because

- it is less costly to the state as whole to operate and maintain than having agencies operate their own systems
- it provides interoperability for functions such as five-digit dialing and caller ID between state agencies
- it uses the state's wide area network based on Multi-Protocol Label Switching, which ensures greater speed, security and voice quality.

The report recommended against a "fork-lift" upgrade to VoIP. Such an approach would be costly, requiring the replacement of existing telephone systems and the upgrading of agency local area networks (LANs). It may also require upgrading the skills of network support staff.

The report recommended a phased-in approach to implementing VoIP

- when an agency builds a new facility
- when agency locations have decided to use a non-traditional telephone service and their existing telecommunications equipment is nearing the end of its life cycle

- when an agency has a critical need for increased mobility and to support teleworker applications.

VoIP pricing is not expected to be less than Centrex. VoIP offers additional features and functions. The greater potential for VoIP lies in its ability to improve employee productivity and services to constituents by integrating voice services with applications, as in these examples:

- routing calls quickly and easily to other agency offices to increase the number of calls that can be answered
- transferring calls between state agencies to respond to emergencies
- automated calling when large numbers of employees need to be contacted quickly and
- transmitting information to a large number of law enforcement or public safety workers at the same time.

October 5, 2006